

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, claims 1, 3 and 9-19 were allowed. Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and claims 2, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the newly cited reference to Wimmer in view of Arato et al. Claims 4-8 and 22-27 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were otherwise indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

To promptly place the application in condition for allowance, rejected independent claim 2 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 7, thereby placing claim 2 in allowable form. Claims 4-6 and 8 each depend on now allowable base claim 2 and therefore are likewise allowable.

Claims 7 and 20-27 have been canceled thereby leaving only allowed claims in the application.

The amendment of claim 2 herein to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 7 clearly does not raise a new issue that would require further search or consideration. Instead, such an amendment of claim 2 clearly places the claim in allowable form. Objected to but otherwise

allowable dependent claims 4, 5, 6 and 8 each depend on claim 2 and are, therefore, likewise allowable.

As only allowed and allowable claims 1-6 and 8-19 remain pending in the application, the application is now in allowable form. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and entry of this amendment together with passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAILING CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: MS NON-FEE AMENDMENT, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date indicated below.

Debra Buonincontri

Name



Signature

December 15, 2003

Date